

COVID-19 Vaccine & Pregnancy

For most people, getting the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible is the safest choice. However, clinical trials to assess safety and efficacy of the vaccine in pregnant women have not been completed. The information presented in this handout will help you make an informed choice about whether to get a COVID-19 vaccine while you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.

What are the benefits of vaccinating against COVID-19?

If you are pregnant, you are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

- Compared to non-pregnant women with COVID-19 who are the same age, pregnant COVID-19 patients are at higher risk of:
 - Developing respiratory complications
 - Being admitted into the intensive care unit (ICU)
 - Requiring life support measures – such as a ventilator or a heart-lung machine (ECMO)
 - Having a preterm birth, and
 - Dying of COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines will prevent between 94-95% of COVID-19 infection.

- Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines' protection against COVID-19 is:
 - Among the best vaccines we have available compared to all recommended vaccines.
 - Consistent across age, gender, race, and ethnicity.
- It is expected that the safety and efficacy for pregnant individuals would be similar to that observed in non-pregnant individuals.

COVID-19 vaccines cannot give you COVID-19.

- mRNA vaccines are not live virus vaccines.
- The COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain ingredients that are known to be harmful to pregnant women or to the fetus.
- Many vaccines are routinely given in pregnancy and are safe (e.g. tetanus, diphtheria, and flu).
- These vaccines do not enter the nucleus of the cell and don't alter human DNA. Therefore, mRNA vaccines cannot cause any genetic changes to an unborn baby.

What are the risks of vaccinating against COVID-19?

COVID-19 vaccines have not yet been tested in pregnant women.

- The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines were tested in ~37,000 people, and there were no serious side effects. However, these vaccines were not tested in pregnant women. Some women did become pregnant during the study. No adverse events in the vaccinated pregnant women have been reported.
- Additionally, developmental and reproductive toxicity (DART) studies, which use animal models, are being conducted to ensure safety of vaccines in pregnant women. Currently:

- Pfizer - DART studies currently underway
- Moderna - found **no safety concerns** in DART study

People getting the vaccine could experience some side effects.

- There were no serious side effects reported in the clinical studies, yet many people have some side effects from both the Moderna and the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.
- Common side effects reported from the Moderna & Pfizer vaccine include injection site pain, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, and fever.
 - Women who experience a fever should take Tylenol (acetaminophen).
- Side effects are more common after the second dose.
- Side effects are a sign your immune system is working.

How to make an informed decision on vaccinating.

1. Make sure you understand as much as you can about COVID-19 and about the vaccine.

2. Have a conversation with a trusted healthcare professional, such as your doctor or midwife, about getting vaccinated.

3. Consider your own risk of getting COVID-19....

You are at increased risk if:

- ✓ You have contact with people outside your household who don't wear masks
- ✓ You are 35 years or older
- ✓ You are overweight
- ✓ You have other medical problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease
- ✓ You are a smoker
- ✓ Your community has a high rate of COVID-19 infection
- ✓ You are a healthcare worker

You are at lower risk if:

- ✓ You are always able to wear a mask
- ✓ You and those you live with can socially distance from others for your whole pregnancy
- ✓ Your community does not have high or increasing rates of COVID-19 being reported

What do the experts recommend?

The **American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG)** recommends: "COVID-19 vaccines should not be withheld from pregnant individuals who meet criteria for vaccination based on ACIP-recommended priority groups."

The **Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine** strongly recommends that pregnant individuals have access to COVID-19 vaccines. They recommend that each person have discussion with their healthcare professional about their own personal choice.